

# MEETING THE POLO CHAMPION!

Polo player Sébastien Le Page met Pablo Mac Donough during “Polo Clinics” at the Polo Club de Chantilly and spoke to him about his historic win at the Argentine Open.

PHOTOGRAPHY IRINA KAZARIDI



Sébastien Le Page and 10-goaler Pablo Mac Donough in Chantilly.

Sébastien Le Page of Polo Park Zürich currently is the most successful player of the POLO+10 World Tour and thus leads the ranking of the Tour. For this reason he was named POLO+10 Ambassador and as such was invited to “Polo Clinics” at the Polo Club de Chantilly near Paris with Pablo Mac Donough. The 10-goaler is Richard Mille Ambassador and one of the best polo players in the world. The “Polo Clinics” were organised by Richard Mille, the luxury Swiss watchmaker, and the renowned Polo Club de Chantilly to celebrate the extension of their partnership. Before the polo training Sébastien Le Page had the chance to interview Pablo Mac Donough for POLO+10.

SÉBASTIEN LE PAGE: PABLO, FOR SEVERAL YEARS YOU HAVE BEEN AND STILL ARE ONE OF THE BEST POLO PLAYERS IN THE WORLD. WHAT IS THE SPORT OF POLO AT ITS TOP LEVEL LIKE AND WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO REMAIN AT THAT HIGHEST LEVEL?  
Pablo Mac Donough: It is very difficult to reach the top and it is even more difficult to maintain it – just like with everything else in life. I have to admit that I have been kind of lucky in my life to be able to play in the best two polo teams of the last 20 years. I was glad I could play in Ellerstina, it was a great experience and I learned a lot. At the beginning we were very young, but then we ended up winning the Argentine Open twice (Editor’s note: in 2008 and in 2010), and the Tortugas Open and the Hurlingham Open several times. It was a learning process. Now I am in La Dolfina and we have been very successful in the last few years. The goal is to keep our motivation high, what gives our team the chance to keep on winning. You need to kind of forget what happened before and just focus on the future. I think that is the key.

SÉBASTIEN LE PAGE: SINCE YOU HAVE WON THE HISTORIC TRIPLE TRIPLE CROWN, IT COULD BE A TEMPTATION TO SLOW DOWN. WHAT IS THE NEXT MAJOR GOAL IN YOUR POLO CAREER?  
Pablo Mac Donough: La Dolfina is one of the best teams in history of polo. If I think about my next goals I say to myself: Why should I stop trying and what could be my motivation to slow down if I have this team to play with? I am glad that I have won the Argentine Open six times, but if I could win the Open eight or ten times, it would be even better, so why shouldn’t I try? I am still young, I am 34 years old, and every year I get better horses and the teammates know each other even better. We still want to win more tournaments. It is not only a job, it is still a passion.

SÉBASTIEN LE PAGE: IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT POLO THAT A PLAYER SHOULD ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND?  
Pablo Mac Donough: You always have to believe in yourself and be positive. Sometimes when you are on a winning track you gain confidence and sometimes things are not working out that well and you let yourself down a bit. But you should not be too dramatic when you lose and not too euphoric when you win. Believe in yourself and if things do not work out for some reason, the best way is to keep on trying.

SÉBASTIEN LE PAGE: WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIALS WHEN YOU TEACH POLO?  
Pablo Mac Donough: To be honest, I do not feel like a good teacher. It is very difficult to teach the basics when you have



In 2015, Pablo Mac Donough and his team La Dolfina won the Argentine Triple Crown for the third time in a row.

started to play polo at a very young age, because then you do many things naturally. It is probably easier for me to teach people who already know how to play and to help them to improve themselves. Honestly, regarding the very beginning of playing polo there is not much I can say except one thing: The riding is very important, riding is everything! If you cannot ride you can forget about hitting the ball. When you start to play polo you should focus a lot on the riding. When you get the riding right polo will come naturally. Hitting the ball is much easier if you know how to ride. You can start to learn riding and playing polo at the same time, but you should not forget about the riding. You should spend equal time on both.

SÉBASTIEN LE PAGE: IN POLO, HOW MUCH PERCENTAGE IS THE RIDER AND HOW MUCH PERCENTAGE IS THE HORSE?  
Pablo Mac Donough: Lets say 50/50. It is like in car racing: If you have a really good driver with a bad car, you cannot win a championship. In polo it is the same: you need the best players with the best horses, otherwise there is no way you can win. That is why I would say 50/50.

SÉBASTIEN LE PAGE: WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME A RICHARD MILLE AMBASSADOR?  
Pablo Mac Donough: I have been introduced to Richard Mille with Prince Muda Bahar of Brunei. I am a very good friend of him since we were very young, since we are about 10 or 12 years old. When he got back to polo in Europe and we started playing together back in 2008/2009, he came up with this idea of collaborating with a brand and named Richard Mille. Through him I



The RM 053 Pablo Mac Donough is a limited edition of 15 pieces in microblasted titanium and titanium carbide.

met Richard Mille himself, who wanted to create a polo watch and we became partners. It is amazing, this is my fifth year with them and I really enjoy the experience with this brand. It is a small brand so you get to know everybody and Richard is such a nice guy.

SÉBASTIEN LE PAGE: IS IT TRUE THAT YOU EVEN PLAY TOURNAMENTS WITH THE WATCH ON YOUR WRIST?  
Pablo Mac Donough: Yes, I always wear my Pablo Mac Donough watch on my wrist, it is my lucky charm. ●